

Get Ready to Rip: Vernonia SK8 Breaks Ground! *continued from front page*

will be on this site skateboards. We're excited to make these dreams come true for the community, because they're our dreams, too!"

Owners Billy and Catherine Coulon founded Evergreen Skateparks, a family run business, in Portland, Oregon after Billy spent time working for some of the original skatepark designers and builders in the industry, including Dreamland and Airspeed.

"Instead of having a City build it, who doesn't know a lot about riding a skateboard and what the right transitions are, what you want is people who actually ride skateboards to design and build it," says Williams. "The owners are really passionate about skateparks. We don't sell a design, we want to work with the community, make changes in the field if needed, and make the best product."

Williams adds that owner Billy Coulon will be on site for parts of the construction. "He's the lead designer and loves being around his projects. He loves operating machinery and doing the concrete. That's the fun part."

Evergreen has built skateparks in 19 states across the U.S., including the Evergreen Skatepark in Hillsboro and the

Windells Skatepark at Mt. Hood. Evergreen has also worked closely with Pearl Jam bass player Jeff Ament, a Montana native who has helped fund skateparks in several small communities across his home state, mostly in smaller rural communities that struggle to find funding, including his hometown of Big Sandy which has just 700 residents; Evergreen has built 17 parks just in Montana. "You can go on a road trip across Montana and stop just about every hour and skate one of our parks," says Williams. Internationally, they built the largest skatepark in Israel – the 30,000 square foot park in Modi'in, and the Stockholm, Sweden Skatepark.

Volunteers and City workers, along with Evergreen crew members, began by clearing and preparing the site, including the removal of a large concrete slab that was left over from the School District maintenance shed formerly located there. Williams says one of those Evergreen crew members working on the Vernonia project is the other Site Foreman, Lance Spiker, who has been building skateparks since 1999. After the site prep is completed, plumbing and drainage was scheduled to be installed. "Then we'll come in and start sculpt-

ing and digging out the bowls, and then you'll start seeing the concrete forms going up," explains Williams. "This will go pretty fast once we get going. We'll have a crew of 14 or 15 well trained guys out here."

Williams says Evergreen specializes in what they call "refined 70s style skateparks" which are designed with a lunar landscape look that was popular at the very start of the skatepark boom. The Vernonia SK8 park will feature that design. "That design was just starting in the 70s and you didn't have skaters building them – it was just cities and different outfits that did concrete work but didn't have any idea about skating, and were still figuring it out. We've taken that look and refined it and modernized it. It will have really nice lines and everything really works with the landscape already here. It will look about as natural as it can be with concrete. For someone that doesn't skate and just drives by, it will look really beautiful."

Vernonia SK8 will be set up like an oval track, with a series of snaking smaller bowls and some street elements flowing around a larger bowl. "It's de-

signed to fit all those different elements and blend them together," says Williams. "Our parks are able to be skated by both professionals and the noob who doesn't know anything about skateboarding. There's a lot of opportunity for people to keep moving. We like to go to towns that have people who used to skate, and we get them skating again. And then they get their kids to skate. Our parks are pretty friendly in that regard and are pretty approachable."

Williams says he believes skateboarding is a great way to get young kids outside and active, and to build self confidence. "It's a real life kind of practice – you're learning things, and building on what you accomplish. I really believe kids that do that at an early age definitely develop tools that apply to the real world. I think it creates more well-rounded individuals. It's really cool when we go back to visit towns where we built a park five years ago and we meet a kid that was just watching from outside the park while we were building, and now they're on their board and rippin'!"

Grandstands Repair Project Asks for Help *continued from front page*

In May 2018 the group presented a business plan to the Council, which identified a fiscal partnership with the Intercultural Society of Vernonia (formerly the Chamber of Commerce) to achieve nonprofit status. The group said they intended to raise the funds needed to restore the grandstands through donations and business support. The business plan proposed a budget for restorations and repair of \$121,500. Ongoing maintenance and operations would be funded through revenue from organized events and vendor fees, with potential events including high school homecoming and alumni games, local sports tournaments, Jamboree events, concerts, and running events.

At the most recent February City Council meeting, Pelster asked the City to partner with the Grandstand Committee and invest \$100,000 for repairs. She said the project has just over \$9,000 in donations waiting to go toward the project. Councilor J.R. Allen, who said

he is the President of the Grandstand Committee, said the project has already acquired some materials for the repairs, including new beams and posts. Mayor Rick Hobart said he has also been deeply involved in the project, and said he has watched the facility deteriorate over time through vandalism and weather. Hobart said before the project asks the City for money they should find a contractor to commit to the repairs and provide an estimated cost. He said Council needs to be sure any decision they make on the project should be sure to benefit the citizens and community of Vernonia.

Council and staff discussed the possibility of using American Recovery Act Plan (ARAP) funds the City has access to. Council agreed to have staff investigate possible funding options and potentially hold a future work session to discuss the City's involvement in the project.

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reflecting the spirit of our community

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